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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 25 April 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing in order to draw your attention to the latest act of Palestinian terrorism perpetrated against the citizens of Israel.

On Thursday, 24 April, at approximately 7.20 a.m. (local time), a suicide bomber perpetrated an attack at the entrance to the main railway station in the Israeli town of Kfar Saba, scattering human remains throughout the area. Were it not for actions taken by an Israeli security guard, who was killed in the attack, to obstruct the terrorist, the human costs would have been far greater. As it were, the force of the five-kilogram bomb used in the attack, packed with insecticide, nails and other projectiles to maximize the pain and suffering of the victims, wounded 14 people, including two with serious injuries. Groups related to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the terrorist unit of the Palestinian Authority's own Fatah movement, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, claimed joint responsibility for the attack.

Yesterday's bombing is merely the latest attempt by Palestinian terrorists to target Israeli civilians. Countless terrorist attacks have been prevented in recent weeks and days by the extraordinary efforts of Israel's security personnel. Later on Thursday, for example, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers thwarted an attempted shooting attack by two Palestinian Hamas militants, armed with an AK-47 assault rifle and several rounds of ammunition at the time of their arrest. This past Sunday, 20 April, an Israeli civilian was wounded and her house damaged when two Qassam rockets were launched from Gaza at the Israeli city of Sderot. Between Thursday, 17 April, and Saturday, 19 April, IDF soldiers thwarted a suicide attack planned by members of an Islamic Jihad cell. The explosive-laden suitcase, which the cell members had intended to detonate in Israel, was also uncovered. This continuing daily threat of Palestinian terrorism, deliberately aimed at Israeli civilians, underscores the absolute necessity of Israel's preventive security measures.

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Israel holds the Palestinian leadership fully responsible for its failure to suppress the campaign of terrorism, and its support and glorification of such acts, which continue to endanger the lives of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Israel therefore calls upon this leadership to take concerted actions to disarm and delegitimize terrorist groups operating freely in its territory, in accordance with international obligations, Security Council resolutions and its own signed agreements.

Only once terrorism is fully and finally rejected as an acceptable tactic can we advance to a process of negotiations, which are the only means of achieving a genuine and lasting peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Terrorists and their supporters cannot, and will not, be rewarded by political concessions. To do so would encourage more terrorism and further diminish the prospects for peace.

Israel hopes that the Palestinian leadership will finally provide a real partner for a secure peace and meet its long-overdue obligations so that an environment conducive to genuine dialogue can be achieved. The common objective of peace cannot be achieved until the Palestinian leadership genuinely renounces the strategy of terrorism, and takes the necessary steps to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, bring terrorist operatives to justice, confiscate and destroy illegal weapons, and eliminate incitement in Palestinian religious, educational and political institutions.

Israel calls upon the international community to reaffirm its absolute rejection of terrorist tactics and to use its authority to compel all regimes that sponsor and incite terrorism in the region to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with international law, signed agreements and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1373 (2001).

I submit this letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000, which document the criminal terrorist strategy for which the terrorists and their supporters must be held fully accountable.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 160 and 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative